

To: Federal Communications Commission

The following are comments of the River Falls Cable Communications Advisory Committee in response to FCC's "Notice of Proposed Rulemaking" 05-311 on "video franchising".

River Falls, Wisconsin is a city of 13,421. Comcast Cable Communications, Inc is our franchised cable provider. Our community has negotiated cable franchises since 1986.

To access the public rights of way the cable operator pays a franchise fee to the City of River Falls in the amount of 5% of the cable operator's revenues. The revenues for franchise fee purposes are calculated based on the gross revenues of the operator, in accordance with the Federal Cable Act. Revenue is used to support the creation of more than 100 hours of community programming per month.

The city also requires the cable operator to provide capacity for public, educational, and/or governmental ("PEG") access channels on the cable system where the afore mentioned programs are televised. Currently one channel , RFC-TV Ch. 16, is devoted to public and government access; another is dedicated for the use of K-12 public education and a third channel is operated by the University of Wisconsin – River Falls.

Our PEG access channels deliver more hours of original, locally made programs than all the commercial television stations combined. We desire to maintain this capacity of local program. As we understand, legislation being proposed will threaten our ability to continue to deliver our community programming to the 6000 households that receive our channels.

- Our PEG channels provide the only televised coverage of local government meetings and candidate forums.
- Our PEG channels are the only local free speech outlet that televises local church services.
- Our PEG channels are the only televised resource that brings local high school sports into the living rooms of our residents.

Eliminating PEG will reduce the opportunity for citizens to stay informed about our growing city's issues and become detached from their home town. RFC-TV offers an emergency alert system and our video bulletin board informs citizens about local immunization clinics and other health resources.

We believe that those who profit from local public right of ways are obliged to provide the community with means to deliver unique local media content that commercial media is not willing to provide. Our local public access center is the only outlet individuals and non-profit organizations can freely or affordably

access the tools and training to televise their point-of-view. We believe democracy works best when the widest range of ideas and opinions are circulated. Proposed legislation serves to stifle democracy in the our “marketplace of ideas.”

The local cable franchising process functions well in River Falls and we are excited about emerging technologies and look forward to working with the industry that provides them. We are experienced at working with cable service providers to see that the needs of the local community are met and to ensure that the practical business needs of the service provider is taken into account. The City of River Falls therefore, respectfully requests that the FCC encourage congress to pass legislation that maintains current local government franchise authority and empowers our community to negotiate the use of public rights of way with future telecommunications providers.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Woolsey, Chairman
Cable Communications Advisory Committee
River Falls Community Television Channel 16
City of River Falls, Wisconsin